



United States Senate

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May 14, 2012

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LEGISLATIVE AFFAIRS

The Honorable Hillary Rodham Clinton
U.S. Department of State
2201 C Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20520

Dear Secretary Clinton,

I am writing to urge the State Department to address the concerns raised by the American Albacore Fishing Association (AAFA) and the Pacific Fishery Management Council (PFMC) in the attached letters regarding the difficulties their members are experiencing under the U.S.-Canada Albacore Treaty's reciprocal fishing regime.

According to albacore fishermen in California, Washington, and Oregon, the Canadian fleet's increasingly larger boats are crowding out smaller U.S. boats and dominating the albacore catches. Unlimited competition from Canadian boats has had significant impact. Before the treaty, California fishermen reported harvesting 7,000-10,000 tons of albacore annually; they now harvest less than 1,000 tons. While Canada has benefitted under the treaty, at least 600 - 1,000 jobs in California have been lost, and 3,000 more are at risk.

Most U.S. albacore fishermen want to suspend reciprocal fishing access for 2012 to study the treaty's impacts. I understand that Canada is concerned a suspension would impact Canadian fishermen who depend on access to U.S. waters where albacore is more abundant. U.S. ports and processors who rely on business from Canadian boats are also concerned.

Canada is a valued U.S. partner, and it is crucial that we preserve our strong relationship. However, U.S. fishermen should have a fair opportunity to compete for albacore within U.S. waters. As your Department negotiates the treaty's renewal, I urge you to ensure that the treaty's terms will provide an equitable, sustainable, and healthy fishing environment for the U.S. albacore industry.

Thank you for your kind attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

Dianne Feinstein
United States Senator

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Enclosures